



Montessori for 3 to 6 year olds

At the core of the Montessori approach to education is the curriculum developed by Dr Montessori for the 3-6 year-old child. The Montessori 3-6 programme is attended by the largest number of children and is the starting place and mainstay of Montessori education in New Zealand and overseas.

The young child is curious about everything and needs to explore and discover. The Montessori 3-6 learning environment is designed to encourage each child to move, touch, and manipulate. The child has freedom to work independently, based on their own initiatives with gentle and respectful guidance from their teacher.

Montessori 3-6 learning environments are inviting, attractive indoor and outdoor spaces with an intriguing array of learning materials, books, plants, animals, art and music materials, gardening and nature activities.

The Montessori environment contains specially designed, hands on materials that invite children to engage in learning activities of their own individual choice.

Under the guidance of a Montessori teacher, children in a Montessori classroom learn by making discoveries; cultivating concentration, motivation, self-discipline, and a love of learning.

Community of Learners

The Montessori community for 3-6 year olds is often called a *Children's House*, a place in which a child can feel at home and can work with interest at their own tempo and level. The young child has the freedom to choose their own activities using their own initiative and following their individual needs.

The Montessori early childhood centre consists of children of mixed ages. The children learn from each other and because of each other, with older children being role models for younger children. Each child learns to cooperate with children of different ages, to respect and celebrate each others efforts and to take care of themselves, others and their environment. The classroom becomes a thriving community where children are treated with respect and dignity and where they learn to treat others with respect and dignity.

Learning Environment

The Montessori classroom is prepared with the child, and only the child, in mind. The physical space and routines of the classroom are designed to maximise independent learning and exploration. Objects are placed so children can reach what they need, without having to wait for adult help.

Dr Montessori noticed that children do not learn from listening to an adult talk – they learn best from direct experience with objects in their environment. Children have a deep urge to manipulate and explore. Montessori developed learning materials to stimulate the child into discovery. Each Montessori material is simple and carefully designed to appeal to the child at their stage of development.

The prepared environment focuses on the child and in this space only things that

will assist the child's development will be present. Adults must be careful not to offer too much help and interfere with the spontaneous activity of the children.

Montessori Curriculum

The daily practice of Montessori philosophy is made possible by a clearly defined Montessori curriculum. The Montessori curriculum includes practical life, sensorial, language, mathematics, botany, geography, art, music, drama, and environmental studies and more! When you look around a Montessori classroom – you are seeing the Montessori curriculum in all the activities and materials on the shelves.

Note: *Practical Life activities include skills that young children enjoy learning and love to repeat; sweeping, polishing, tying bows, dusting, preparing food ... engagement in these activities builds concentration and co-ordination. Sensorial materials are unique and enable young children to explore and discover shape, size, colour, texture, weight, sound, taste and smell.*

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A Brief History
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Montessori 0 – 3 years
Montessori 3 – 6 years
Montessori 6 – 12 years

“Children are human beings to whom respect is due, superior to us by reason of their innocence and of the greater possibilities of their future.”

— Dr. Montessori’s Own Handbook, page 133

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[Dr Maria Montessori](#)

[Montessori 0 – 3 years](#)

[Montessori 3 – 6 years](#)

[Montessori 6 – 12 years](#)

[Montessori Quotes](#)

PARENTS

[School Search](#)

[Choosing Montessori](#)

[Parenting Ideas](#)

[Montessori Videos](#)

[Parent Guide – 3 to 6 years](#)

[Parent Guide – 6 to 12 years](#)

[Montessori Voices](#)

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